



UNOCT



OSCE



## HIGH-LEVEL CONFERENCE

International and Regional Border Security and  
Management Cooperation to Counter Terrorism  
and Prevent the Movement of Terrorists

**DUSHANBE, TAJIKISTAN • 18-19 OCTOBER 2022**

**Closing Remarks by Mr. Vladimir Voronkov  
Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Office of  
Counter-Terrorism**

Excellencies,  
Dear Colleagues,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honor to present the Co-Chair's summary for this High-Level Conference on "International and Regional Border Security and Management Cooperation to Counter Terrorism and Prevent the Movement of Terrorists," which concludes today.

My special words of gratitude to His Excellency, Emomali Rahmon, President of the Republic of Tajikistan, for the generous hospitality provided by the Government of Tajikistan.

I would also like to thank His Excellency Mr. Sirojiddin Muhridin, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Tajikistan and his Ministry officials in Dushanbe and New York for their tireless efforts to make this Conference a success.

I thank my esteemed colleagues: Ms. Natalia Gherman, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Central Asia and Head of the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia; Her Excellency, Ms. Helga Maria Schmid, Secretary-General of the

Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe and her Representative Ms. Alena Kupchyna; and Her Excellency, Ms. Terhi Hakala, European Union Special Representative for Central Asia, for having co-organized this event with my Office.

I am grateful to all our donors, especially to the State of Qatar, whose generous contribution was important for the success of this Conference.

I am also appreciative of our distinguished speakers and over 700 participants for having shared their views and insights during this event.

Your engagement throughout this conference has greatly contributed to our fruitful deliberations.

It is equally important to note that we had four side-events during the Conference, including on border security, behavioral insights and resource mobilization, whose outcomes complemented our plenary discussions.

Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Dear Colleagues,

A detailed report of this Conference will be issued by my Office in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Tajikistan and other co-organisers in November. Today, I would like to cover key summary conclusions of the Conference based on our discussions over the last two days.

This Conference is the first UNOCT high-level event on border security and management in Central Asia and is a part of the continuing efforts by my Office to sustain multilateral cooperation on counter-terrorism. Its outcomes are relevant for all Member States around the world.

We can all agree that the choice of this Conference theme underscored, how critical border security and management cooperation is to countering terrorism and preventing the movement of terrorists.

Central Asian States recently reiterated, in the updated Joint Plan of Action for the Implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in Central Asia, their

strong will to strengthen border management and cooperation to prevent terrorist travel. The Plan was adopted during the High-Level Conference in Tashkent, Uzbekistan in March 2022.

During our discussions over the last two days, participants highlighted the importance of the “Dushanbe process” in the context of international counter-terrorism efforts. They also acknowledged the valuable contributions made through the three conferences of the Dushanbe process on *Prevention of Violent Extremism in May 2018*; on *International and Regional Cooperation in May 2019*, and our *Border Security and Cooperation Conference* during the last couple of days.

Many participants stressed that the success of the Dushanbe process and support from the countries of the region would help strengthen the regional collaboration process under the Joint Plan of Action (JPOA) for the implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (GCTS). Several participants also underline the need for continuous donor support for its implementation.

A number of participants highlighted the growing importance of border control as emphasized in the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and during the 7th biannual Review of the Strategy which took place in 2020.

Developments in Afghanistan have heightened security concerns for countries in Central Asia and beyond, and have underlined the need for us to remain vigilant to prevent the threat of terrorism and violent extremism from spreading around the world.

Several conference participants highlighted the spillover effect of the terrorist presence in Afghanistan. They also underlined the importance of a peaceful and stable Afghanistan based on the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of women and girls.

The President of Tajikistan also emphasized the need for “a safety belt around Afghanistan.”

Participants also discussed the border security challenges and needs of Central Asian States, identified current trends, threats and risks in border management, shared experiences, and identified avenues for improvements, including how to strengthen the sharing of information and good practices on a range of critical counter-terrorism issues.

We also learned from experts, front-line actors and stakeholders of the potential linkages between terrorism and transnational organized crime, including the illicit trafficking of small arms,

conventional ammunition, as well as nuclear, chemical, radiological and biological weapons, and the need for concerted action in this regard.

Participants underlined the importance of leveraging regional and international cooperation to improve detection and prevent the cross-border flow of foreign terrorist fighters, based upon proven border security measures, mechanisms and policies that work and at the same time comply with international human rights, humanitarian, and refugee law.

Through this Conference, we have developed a better appreciation of the interconnected challenges and emerging trends in Central Asia, and how to collectively address them.

We also have a better grasp of the innovative approaches and solutions available to secure our borders and prevent the movement of terrorists in the region – ranging from the responsible use of biometrics, passenger data and artificial intelligence, to the application of behavioral insights and techniques.

It was also noted by several participants that human rights-compliant, rule-of-law-based and gender-responsive approaches are always at the core of all successful counter-terrorism efforts around the globe.

Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Dear Colleagues,

It is clear that despite the significant progress we have made in our fight against terrorism in Central Asia and beyond, much more is needed to build regional and national capacities to prevent the cross-border movement of terrorists, including foreign terrorist fighters.

It is also clear that while enhanced technologies and innovative tools are invaluable in our common fight against terrorism, the key to successful and effective border security and management is coordination at all levels – international, regional and national.

As underscored several times throughout this Conference, Member States must take ownership and step up their national efforts to improve border and customs controls to detect the movement of terrorists.

The importance of international cooperation and multilateralism was also emphasized by many participants as a critical instrument for strengthening border security and cooperation.

To respond to the latest challenges and support such regional cooperation, UNOCT and UNRCCA launched the Counter Terrorism Early Warning Network for Central Asia in June 2022. This initiative aims to address the threats at national and regional levels from Afghanistan in a comprehensive way by gathering the expertise of law enforcement agents, international and regional organizations, civil society and academia.

We also discussed the centrality of “comprehensive border security and management strategies” that take into account terrorist threats and address the need for coherent action among the many stakeholders at borders.

I encourage Member States to make use of the UNOCT/UNCCT Border Security and Management programme, which has delivered extensive support here in Central Asia, and in other priority regions such as in Africa and South East Asia.

We need to strengthen the collection, analysis, utilization and timely exchange of operational information to identify terrorism-related threats at our borders, including through effective screening against databases and watchlists.

In this regard, I wish to reiterate that the United Nations Security Council Resolutions 2178 and 2396 obligate all Member States to collect, process and analyze advance passenger information and passenger name record data, while being mindful of the right to privacy, as well as the risk of discriminatory profiling.

The United Nations can support you in these efforts. My Office’s flagship, All-of-UN initiative, the Countering Terrorist Travel Programme, can support you in building an operational unit equipped with the UN’s goTravel software to collect and analyse this data, backed by a strong legal framework and in partnership with the airlines.

Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Dear Colleagues,

We also need stronger collaboration to prevent terrorists from benefitting from transnational organized crime in the region, including through the illicit trafficking and use of small arms and light weapons.

The United Nations, through the Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact and its Borders Management Working Group, remain committed to supporting Central Asian States to strengthen their border control capacities and cross-border cooperation, including through the

responsible use of new and emerging technologies, in close cooperation with other partners in the region.

Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Dear Colleagues,

Our deliberations over these past two days have further emphasized the need for comprehensive, integrated and whole-of-society strategies and approaches to strengthen border security in the context of counter-terrorism.

Partnerships that leverage unique entry-points, capabilities and insights from a cross-section of society and the private sector are essential to building resilience to terrorism, promoting human rights and gender equality, advancing sustainable development, and supporting the rehabilitation and reintegration of returnees.

They also increase the legitimacy of decision-making and accountability and enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of counter-terrorism laws and policies.

This is why my Office has prioritized its engagement with academia, civil society, and the private sector, including women and youth-led groups, and has strengthened its efforts to mainstream gender and human rights in its programming.

Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Border Security and Management continues to be one of the most important priority areas of engagement for my Office.

Our technical assistance and capacity-building initiatives are aimed at supporting Member States, including Central Asia, to fully implement the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, as well as relevant Security Council resolutions.

As this Conference has underscored, the provision of such support is contingent upon predictable and sustained funding to meet the border security-related challenges posed by terrorism.

I therefore take this opportunity to once again draw your attention to the United Nations Multi-Year Appeal for Counter Terrorism, which UNOCT launched last year.

The Multi-Year Appeal includes targeted initiatives for Member States, such as UNOCT/UNCCT flagship Border Security and Management Programme, Joint Plan of Action project and many others projects across all four pillars of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, and is demonstrative of the coordinated counter-terrorism action undertaken by the United Nations system, under the leadership of the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism.

Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Terrorism remains one of the most serious threats to international peace and security.

Borders are the first and last lines of defense in confronting this common challenge.

I urge Member States to continue working together to address the challenges posed by terrorism, including through the United Nations.

My Office is firmly committed to its strong and enduring partnership with all Member States and stakeholders represented here today.

Ташаккыр! (Thank you in Tajik)